



SMU mourns the passing of a visionary leader and Chancellor **Tito Mboweni**

The Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) is deeply saddened by the loss of our esteemed Chancellor, Tito Titus Mboweni. His visionary leadership, which began on 10 May 2024, has left an indelible mark on our institution and the nation. His passing creates a void that will be deeply felt, but his legacy will continue to guide and inspire us all.

Mboweni was a respected political figure and a man of great warmth, wit, and dedication. One of his early engagements as Chancellor was a "meet and greet" with SMU's management, labour, and student representatives on 7 August 2024, an event that many now regard as a historic moment for the university. During this gathering, in his characteristic humorous style, he lightened the mood by joking, "You'll be glad that I did not prepare lunch today," a testament to his approachable nature and love for connecting with people.

Throughout his tenure as Chancellor, Mboweni showed a deep commitment to SMU's growth and sustainability. He engaged with university leadership on critical issues, such as infrastructure development, academic innovation, and financial sustainability. On 4 September 2024, Mboweni had a dinner engagement with the university council in which he urged SMU to focus on the delivery of the academic project and forge partnerships in areas of knowledge production and research with like-minded institutions in Africa and the world. He also emphasised the importance of securing external funding and investing in infrastructure to improve the student experience and the university's competitive standing in the health sciences sector. He saw SMU as an institution of higher learning and a beacon of health and wellness that could lead South Africa and the African continent towards improved healthcare outcomes.

With a background that includes serving as South Africa's Minister of Finance and Governor of the South African Reserve Bank, Mboweni brought unparalleled expertise and vision to SMU. His signature remains immortalised on banknotes still in circulation—a symbol of his far-reaching influence. As Chancellor, he actively supported the university's vision of establishing a fit-for-purpose teaching hospital to enhance SMU's clinical training and research capabilities. He understood that expanding the training platforms for healthcare professionals was not just a priority, but an urgent necessity for both SMU and the country.

His vast network, built through years of leadership in both public and private sectors, opened doors for SMU, helping the university forge international partnerships and attract resources. He emphasised the importance of private-public collaboration, urging the university to leverage private capital for research, infrastructure, and other key projects. His strategic thinking was driven by the belief that SMU could elevate itself through focused initiatives that would ensure its sustainability and global competitiveness.

Educationally, Mboweni held a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Political Science from the National University of Lesotho and a Master's degree in Development Economics from the University of East Anglia. He held numerous prominent roles, including Advisor to Goldman Sachs International, Chairman of Nampak Limited, and Non-Executive Director at Discovery Limited. These positions and his remarkable public service made him one of South Africa's most respected leaders.

In his time at SMU, Mboweni became more than just a figurehead. He was a guiding force who saw the potential for SMU to be a global leader in health sciences. His pragmatic approach to the complexities of higher education and his ability to balance the pursuit of resources with social change was remarkable. As he once wisely noted, "Contradictions are an inherent mechanism in the advancement of social change."

SMU extends its deepest condolences to Mboweni's family, friends, and all who knew him. His passing is a significant loss not only to SMU but also to the entire nation. His unwavering commitment to serving the people of South Africa will continue to inspire generations to come. As we mourn his loss, we also celebrate his life and the extraordinary legacy he leaves behind.

May his soul rest in peace.

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